



# Dr Barbara McKay

Director Institute of Family Therapy

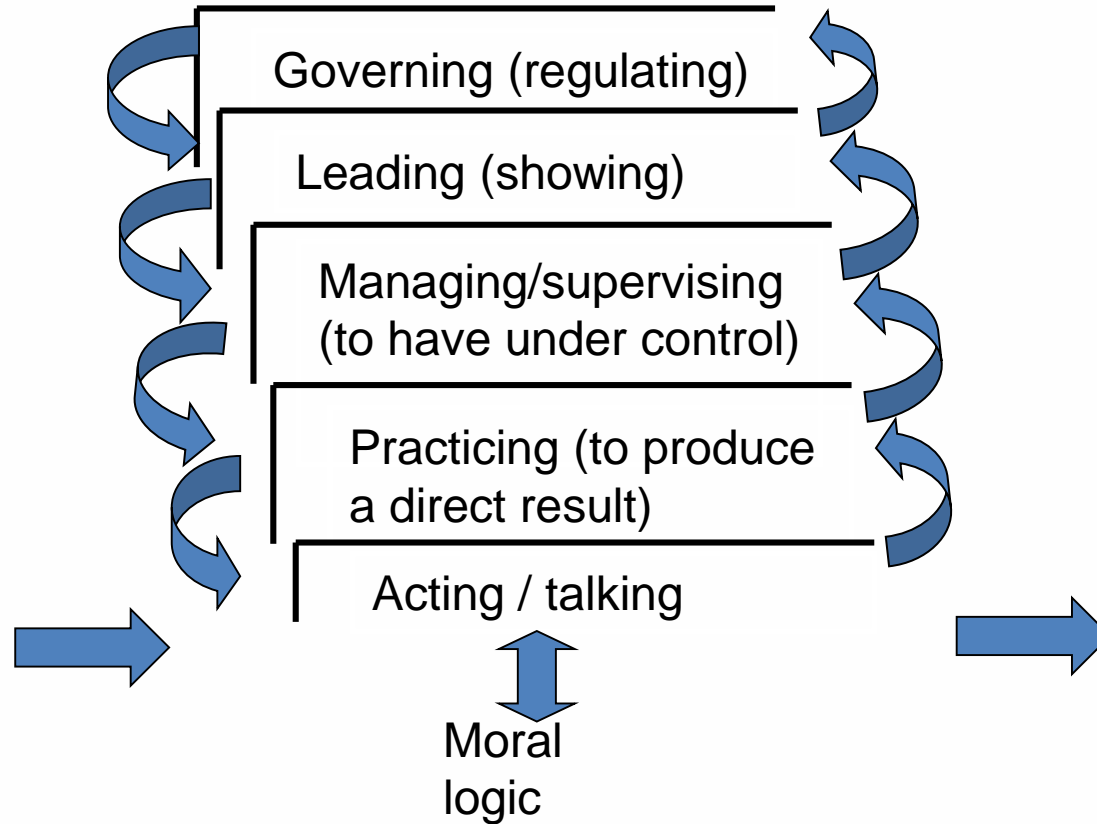
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# **Systemic approaches to social work leadership, management, supervision and practice:**

**An ecological perspective that drives organisational change.**

**Dr Barbara McKay**

# Context for change (ing)



# Moving from extrinsic drivers to intrinsic drivers

- Leading with the transformational actions of curiosity and reflexivity
- Managing by creating the conditions for experimentation, trial and error and feedback loops
- Supervising with a clear theory of social work practice
- Practicing with a relational focus

# Leading change is about.....

- Creating an alignment of strengths that makes a systems weaknesses irrelevant. (Peter Drucker)
- Organisations are about human capacity with infinite connectivity the breathes life and vitality into the system.

# Systemic /ecology

The success of the whole community depends on the success of its individual members, while the success of each member depends on the success of the community as a whole. Nourishing the community means nourishing those relationships (Capra 1997)

## Building a shared vision

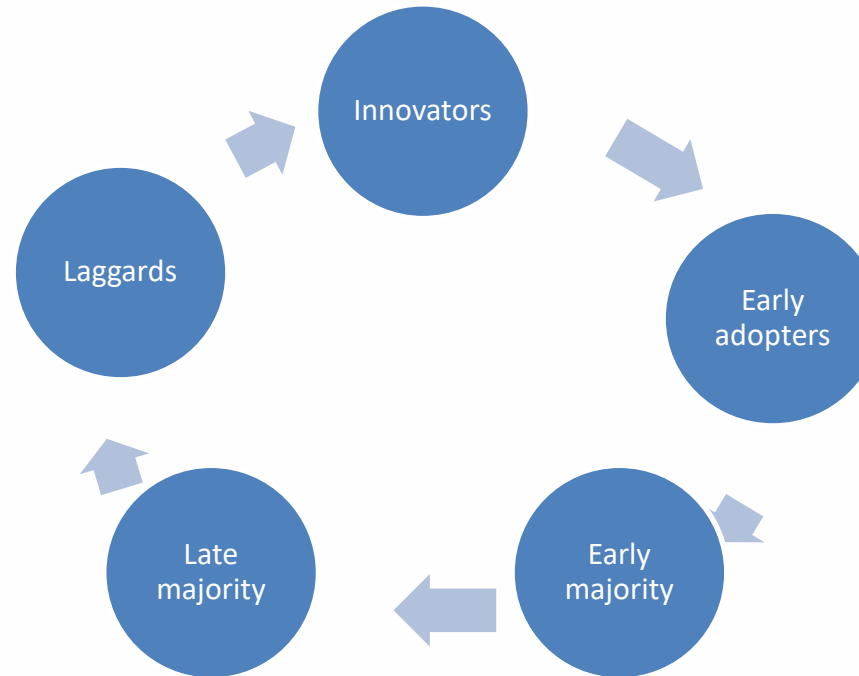
- “when teams are truly learning, not only are they producing extraordinary results, but the individual members are growing more rapidly than could have occurred otherwise” (Senge, 2006, p9)

# Key systemic principles - getting started

- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts – interactional and relational patterns (integrity of the system – ecology)
- Relationship between parts makes the whole - coordination / coherence and fit
- Information and news of difference stimulates change



## Theory of change – the tipping point



Adapted from Gladwell 2000

**Innovators – blue sky thinkers, risk takers**

**Early adopters – essential to the innovators to create confidence**

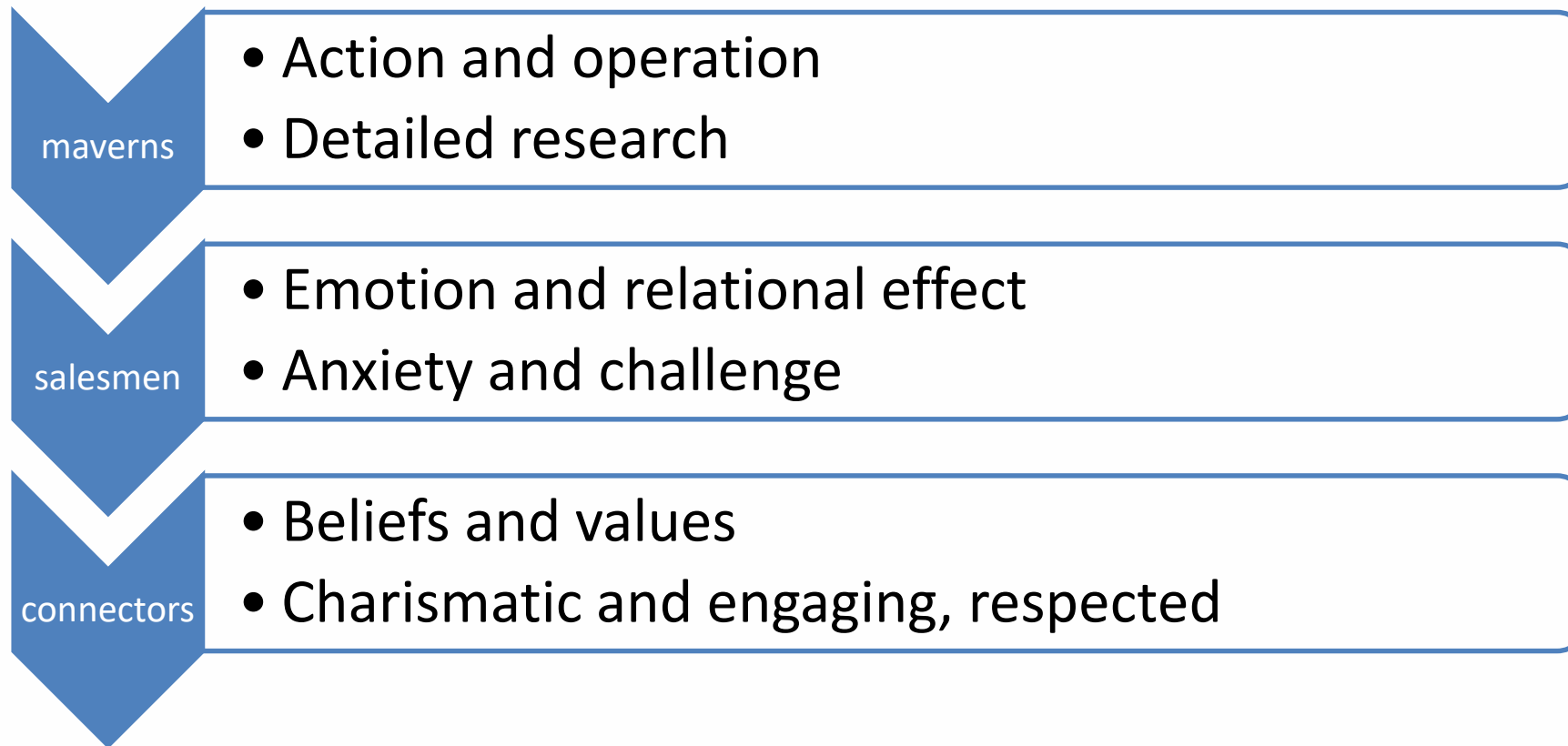
**Early majority – go with the flow – start of a bulge towards change**

**Late majority – go with change when they see no alternative**

**Laggards – always hesitant and reluctant**

**Principles of epidemic transmission**

# Transforming individual mastery to shared vision



# Adapting and succeeding...

responding

- Understand history
- Know what to keep and abandon

Relationally  
adapting

- Mobilizing people
- Including stakeholders

# Creating success

- Based on cybernetic theory
- First order change (at the level of behaviour)
- Second order change (at the level of relationship and identity)
- Third order change (professional contribution, responsibility and accountability)

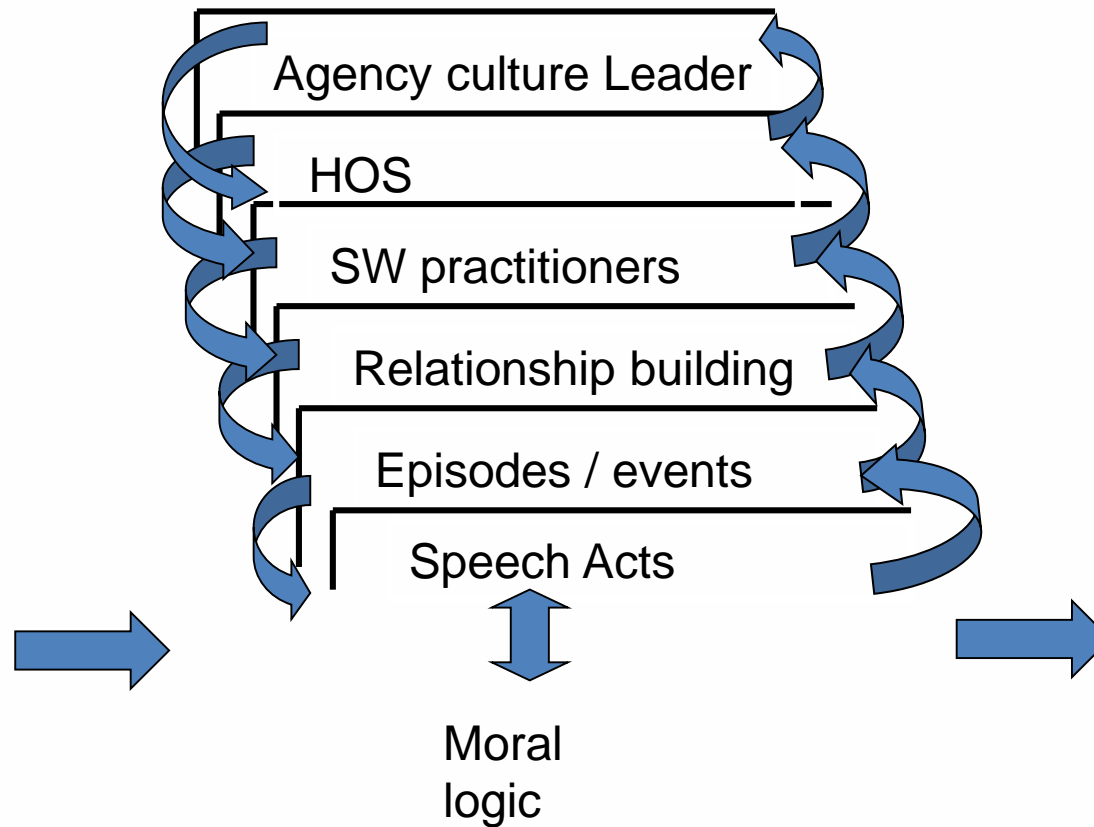
# Transformational traps

- Don't get side-tracked
- Don't change everything all at once
- Action and vision must be coherent
- Don't get derailed with another idea that seems interesting – start and finish
- Understand the capacity of the leadership group

# Harnessing the system

- Introducing ideas and practices that can be utilized across boundaries
- Systemic orientation transformed into specific practices
- Some ideas relate to forms of communication to create cultural shift – coordination
- Many ideas relate to decision making to create coherence

## How it fits together – case example



# Leading- showing the way

- Process to practice
- Confidence to change structures
- Using systemic frameworks to manage the reality that risk always creates anxiety
- Developing a coherent theory of change in social work



# Managing – to have under control

- Doing the right thing as well as doing things right
- Rigour and imagination as a context for managing (both / and)
- Managing as a relational practice with permeable boundaries up and down

## Supervising- developing practice

- Monitoring to generative practice
- Emphasis on patterns and interaction
- Confidence in the workforce using consistent approaches
- Creating career pathways that recognizes new skills as transformational

# Practicing – within a coherent model

- Making change and managing risk
- Clear intervention practices with body of knowledge
- Use of language
- Effect on workforce

# Contact details

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